

COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

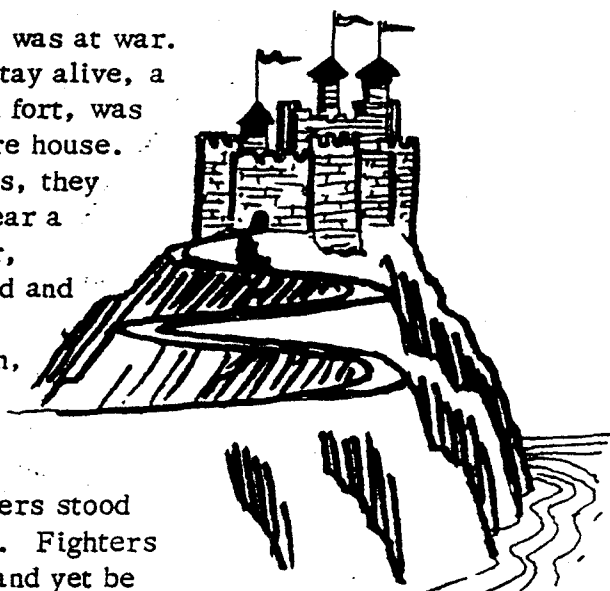
Castles were important in the days when Europe was at war. Many times neighbors would fight each other, and to stay alive, a strong castle was necessary. The castle, a home and fort, was also a prison, a place to store weapons, and a treasure house.

To make it hard for enemies to attack the castles, they were built on top of a hill, on a high dirt mound, or near a swamp. In England they built moats, filled with water, around their forts. Then a drawbridge would be raised and lowered so traffic could move across the moat.

A castle had many parts. First there was a high, thick outer wall. Along the wall were little platforms for guards to stand. The platforms hung over the castle wall so hot stones and rocks could be thrown through the holes in the floor onto the attackers. Towers stood along the walls and had long narrow slits built in them. Fighters could throw spears, arrows, and rocks through them and yet be protected.

Inside the wall was a courtyard and a dungeon. The dungeon was 50 to 60 feet tall and the strongest part of the castle.

Today, castles are rarely lived in but many are taken care of because of their historical interest. For an exciting adventure visit a castle!



1. This story is about:
 - (a) fighting
 - (b) weapons
 - (c) forts
 - (d) castles
2. How would people get across a moat?
 - (a) boat
 - (b) swim
 - (c) draw bridge
 - (d) they didn't
3. A castle was not:
 - (a) a treasure house
 - (b) a home for the poor
 - (c) a prison
 - (d) a fort
4. What was the strongest part of the castle?
 - (a) the dungeon
 - (b) the draw bridge
 - (c) the towers
 - (d) the court yard
5. When invaders attack a castle, those inside:
 - (a) went into the dungeon
 - (b) drained the moat
 - (c) raised the draw bridge
 - (d) gathered in the court yard
6. In this story, a moat is:
 - (a) a deep, broad ditch
 - (b) a swamp
 - (c) a tunnel
 - (d) an old river
7. Why are these rarely lived in today?
 - (a) because of the dangers
 - (b) they are not allowed to
 - (c) they are torn down
 - (d) the upkeep is too expensive
8. Why do you think people built their homes around castles?
 - (a) help protect the castle
 - (b) because they were forced to
 - (c) for their own protection
 - (d) reasons unknown